

Testimony to the NY Complete Count Commission

Utica, NY. Friday 26 April, 2019

Jean Currie

Trustee, Edith B. Ford Memorial Library, Ovid, NY

Good Morning.

My name is Jean Currie and I am a Trustee of the Edith B. Ford Memorial Library in Ovid NY.

Ford Library is in Seneca County and serves the residents of three towns with a population (as of 2010) of 8,484. There are two school districts, it is rural with a very limited number of public services such as health care facilities, grocery stores, or even gas stations! Internet access is poor with very little available broadband. In 2013, 21% of the county had no or only dial-up access. The area has a high poverty level but with some areas of relative wealth along two lakeshores. Agriculture, including wineries and niche fruits and vegetables, is the main industry although there are many small mom and pop businesses throughout the area. There is a large and growing population of Amish.

Ford Library is a major community center and with wonderful support of the community is open 50 hours a week. In the last year, the library has gone through a major expansion project and with a lot of hard fund-raising work has been able to double the size of the building, add more public spaces, provide over 20 public access computers, and now has improved broadband and WiFi Internet access.

As a result, Ford Library will be a major community support for the census next year. Here is why:

- We are a well-trusted local organization able to educate patrons about the census: what it is, why it matters, and what to do.
- We have the staff and the infrastructure to allow patrons to complete the census online at the library. We are a trusted place for those without computers or Internet access such as the Amish.
- We have a history and culture of digital security and online privacy. Patrons are assured that no-one but them will see or know what they have done.
- We have a terrific relationship with the kids in our area - we can work with them to encourage their families to complete the census whether at the library or at home.
- We also have excellent relationships with other local organizations such as the two school districts, the Fire Department, STEPS (Seneca Towns Engaging People for Solutions), a neighborhood health improvement initiative. All of us will work together to encourage completion of the census by everyone.

All libraries, including mine, are ready to help NYS to get as complete a census count as possible.

Thank you for your time.

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